

## For Your Information

January 8, 2013 | By USCIRF

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) today released a policy brief, “Russia: Unruly State of Law.” This policy brief, which analyzes the state of religious freedom and related rights in Russia, reflects USCIRF’s long-standing focus on that country and the findings from the Commission’s latest visit in late September 2012.

From the policy brief:

Russia is now a police state. Russian civil society activist told USCIRF Chair, Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett...The Kremlin has not just passed a set of bad new laws in 201

2

, it has changed the Russian political system.

Overall, religious freedom conditions in Russia continue to deteriorate. Chronic serious problems highlighted in previous USCIRF reports remain, including the application of the

religion law and the use of the anti-extremism law against peaceful religious groups and individuals. USCIRF is concerned by the arsenal of new laws against civil society passed by the Putin administration in 2012.

The draft blasphemy bill before the Duma, if passed in the spring of 2013, would further curtail the freedoms of religion, belief and expression.

Russia’s most severe human rights abuses occur in the North Caucasus, where violators operate with almost total impunity. Chechnya’s Kremlin-appointed president, Ramzan Kadyrov, condones or oversees mass violations of human rights, including religious freedom.

Russia’s leading human rights NGOs have said that they will not register as “foreign agents.”

To read the full policy brief, please go to: <http://www.uscifr.gov/reports-and-briefs/policy-focus.html>  
To view USCIRF’s “Did You know” that focuses this week on Russia go to: <http://www.uscifr.gov/reports-and-briefs/did-you-know.html>

To interview a USCIRF Commissioner, please contact Samantha Schnitzer at [\(202\) 786-0613](tel:202-786-0613) or [sschintzer@uscirf.gov](mailto:sschintzer@uscirf.gov)

or